



John 1:1-5,9 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4** In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Icebreaker

Have you ever sported a mullet? What kind of feelings do you have about mullets?

Conversation Starters

1. What is your favorite Christmas tradition? How did it start? Do you have any Christmas traditions specific to your race, ethnicity or cultural background?

Have someone read the two Scripture passages above.

2. Karla shared that both nature and the Gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke and John tell the story of Jesus. Is this a new idea for you? If so, what do you make of this idea? If not what do you observe or see in nature that tells the story of God? What other deep spiritual truths does nature reveal?
3. Early Christian missionaries from the mediterranean observed Northern Europeans spiritual celebrations around winter solstice and instead of trying to abolish them, added a deeper meaning to the celebration.
 - a. Why was that such a wise thing to do?
 - b. Why is it so hard for people to encounter foreign ideas or customs and pay close enough attention to find the meaning already present in the tradition to build upon?
 - c. How open would you be to having a deeper meaning imparted on your culture, traditions or spiritual celebrations? Why does it matter?
 - d. Can you think of any current Christmas traditions that aren't overly spiritual but hold a deeper truth?
4. How have you experienced the truth, "from deep darkness comes new life" in your inner world?
5. How could you begin to look to nature like the shortening days and lengthening nights to better understand God? To better love people around you? How could this help you connect to Scripture?
6. Share a time darkness blindsided you.
7. How have your life experiences so far taught you that out of deep darkness comes new life?